

THE BLADE'S LETTER BOX

Glad the Blade Lives.

Bellaire, Mich.—Enclosed please find \$1 for the paper to move up my subscription one notch and fifteen cents for one Memorial pamphlet. I am glad the Blade still lives, but I miss Brother Moore's good words and his Prohibition doctrine.—JEROME HILL.

Can't Do Without Blade.

Des Moines, Iowa.—I am one whole month in arrears and as I don't want to miss one issue of the Blade I will send enclosed one dollar to put me in line with the paid up list. I feel like a sneak to be far behind for a paper as good as the Blade. You see by my number that I have moved, please change from 1413 to 1427. I can't do without the Blade for the price so continue it right along.—JEROME STONER.

Strongly Sympathetic.

Seattle, Wash.—I am sorry to see that the Blade is up against it once more financially. I enclose a dollar for Memorial pamphlets, also a well meant criticism of parts of some of your late editorials. With best wishes I remain.—O. H. STONE.

One Hundred Per Cent Better.

King's Park, N. Y.—Enclosed please find post office money order for two dollars and twenty-five cents which is to pay for the Blade to 1907 and twenty-five cents for postage on the Rome book. The Blade is 100 per cent cleaner and better under your editorship.—C. ASHMUSEN.

Wants Wilson's Article.

Grand Junction, Col.—I enclose two clippings. You'll know what to do with them. I enclose 25 cents for extra of Blade with Wilson's article. I will soon be able to begin my work of enlightening the children of the church people.—J. W. SAWYER.

Best in United States.

Sandeland, Tex.—I enclose you \$1 to pay on subscription. Keep the Blade coming it is the best paper in the United States.—M. H. GAID.

You Can Have Others.

Gray, Ky.—I enclose \$1 for renewal to the Blade. Can I get a copy of Dr. Wilson's Rome book? Or are there any printed except those subscribed for?—S. T. WIDNER.

Sent Two Blades Same Week?

Caplinger Mills, Mo.—I send in this fifty cents for the Moore Memorial. Please send them as soon as you can. When will you have Dr. Wilson's Rome book ready for mailing. I am getting anxious to read it. The Blade is good all of the time; didn't you get it out on May 13th, none of them was received here.—J. M. AUSTIN.

No Doubt About It.

Emanuel, Ky.—I enclose you clipping from Cincinnati Post which shows how ignorance and superstition can make anything most substantiate the Bible and to twist Shakespeare a little "trifles light as air become proofs of holy writ."—EMMET JOYNER.

The clipping:

Locusts to Remind us of Pharaoh. Editor Post? I notice in The Post of the 29th instant an inquiry by some party at Halsey, Ky., concerning the locusts, and the significance of the letter on their wings. I think the letter is M. The first account we have of locusts coming in vast number was when the plague was visited upon Pharaoh. The locusts' continual song is "Pharaoh," which was the royal name of the King, whose surname was Meneptha, which explains the initial M. As to their visitation in vast numbers, it is to keep us in remembrance of the Biblical events of Pharaoh's time, just as the ark in the clouds reminds us of God's covenant with Noah not to destroy the world again with a flood.

E. L. COUNTS

Roderfield, W. Va.

High Sounding Praises.

Denton, Texas.—Please find enclosed 30 cents in stamps for which please send me two copies of Moore Memorial pamphlet. You are the right man in the right place. The Blade is the equal of any publication of the kind on the globe. With kindest wishes for your health and success.—ROBT. G. WRIGHT.

We Are Second to None.

Quinlan, Okla.—You will find enclosed a post office money order for \$1.25 to pay for my paper which will square me up until August next and 25 cents for a copy of Mrs. Henry's book on "Marriage and Divorce," which you will please send to my address. We consider the Blade better than ever and like your editorials. They are second to none. Success to the Blade. E. L. MATTESON.

Likes the Memorial.

Dan'ee, Ohio.—Enclosed find eighteen cents in United States postage stamps for the Moore Memorial. Am well pleased with it. Every Liberal should have one for future use. Keep on with your good work, you are doing you will have the best of success. Onward, onward, with reason.—W. J. HOSTETTER.

Wants Truth Any Old Way.

Pasadena, Calif.—For two weeks I have not received my Blue Grass Blade. Began to think my time had passed and you had cut me off from among my people unceremoniously, with or without malice maliciously, etc. But referring to my post office order receipts I find a receipt for \$1 June 12th, 1905. So there must be some mistake in the address, or mis-carried somewhere. Well, take the dollar and send me the Blade until I ask you to shut it off please. Here is my address as plain as a Jack rabbit's ears. I am passed 70 years old—vomited up the Bible with priestcraft 56 years ago—and just want take another dose in any shape or form. But am willing to take eternal truths in all cases—any sized doses and in any form.—H. H. DOW.

Sings a Sweet Song.

Pinkerton, Tex.—Some time ago I sent you five new subscribers at 50 cents and \$1 to move up my tab another year, also 15 cents to pay postage on my Rome book as I am an old subscriber on the Rome fund. Also at the same time \$1.15 for a copy of Rome book to be sent to a Mr. Webb of Pinkerton, Texas. Have not been getting my Blade for a good while. Look it up and if it is lost let me know and I will send money order. I will enclose \$2, send me \$1 in C. C. Moore pamphlets and use the other \$1 on my subscription. Don't fail to send my Rome book. If you don't find J. G. Blake on your list and the money I sent let me know, and I will sure hunt it up. I am proud of our editor of the Blade, and it could not have fallen on a better man. The Blade in its present shape is better than ever.—J. G. BLAKE.

Approves Blade's Policy.

Vincennes, Indiana.—You are certainly deserving of better support than you seem to be getting. So I hasten to send another dollar, which please place to my credit, but do not set my subscription ahead any, for you had put it to 1907 when it ought to have been put to 1906. So this dollar pays up to 1907, as my label is marked to that date. I like your liberality in allowing everybody to have their say. We can not all see alike, but we can be tolerant toward each other.

I like the writers of this paper, but think they, or at least some of them put too much stress on some of our ways of doing things and not enough on others. I think that people want to or ought to get more intelligence in their little heads. They ought to learn as nearly as they can how to live in the broadest sense of the term. If they did that a lot of our ills would be cured. I would like to write for publication if I could be interesting. But I feel that I have not the ability. Now do not make another mistake in giving me credit. This only pays up to January 1907.—ALBERT P. JOHNSON.

Dr. Wilson's Oration Praised

Shepherdsville, Ky.—I notice by the Blade just received that Rome book is ready for distribution, and that simply means that I am quite ready and anxious to read it. So at your early convenience you will greatly oblige to send copy as below. And just here friend Hughes, before closing my note, let me thank you not only for the very liberal supply, but the promptness with which you sent the Wilson oration at the Capt. Henry obsequies, and for which you received but 10 cents. So as I have just 12 cents more in stamps about my clothes or writing desk, you will find 10 cents on the inside and two on the outside of this note. I am so sort of a critic, but judged under my standard, I am free to say, if Dr. W. has either said or written anything truer, grander or prettier than his utterances on the occasion of his late oration on the life and character of Capt. Henry, I have not seen it. Col. Ingersoll I think has not surpassed it by anything of his on a like occasion. But enough and so with best wishes for you and the Blade.—WOOD NERWETHER.

Knows What Sympathy Means.

Marshall, Ills. I can now more fully sympathize with Dr. Wilson and Mrs. Henry, for death has also entered our home and taken our third son, little Harold, aged 10 years.

None but the immediate family can know the poignant grief that comes from the loss of the loved at home. It seems to me that our grief is the more overwhelming because we can see nothing in nature that can assure us that life is immortal and that this personality shall live again. I have

read no page of Nature's Open Book, that even suggests immortality.

I believe that we are separated forever, yet such a belief is more consoling to me than to entertain the belief of a hell and heaven, which also separate members of families for all eternity.

The Christian may reason to the conclusion that God knows best and bow to his decree in humble submission, but that is no consolation to me, when I see the blind, the lame, and the pauper, who are begging for death to release them, while our own son who loved life so well, was cut down so soon by the chilling frosts of that grim Destroyer.

But to the point. This was the first Freethought funeral ever held in this part of the country, and we were refused the use of the Baptist Church, for the services, but services were held at the grave and in conformity with our belief. No preacher. No prayer. A beautiful preparation on our views of death was read by one of my friends, which I think has set many to thinking already. Today three men came to me and said they wanted the Blade.

I have taught school in this vicinity for twenty years, and never contracted a debt that I never paid, yet all of my integrity, honesty, and manhood counted for nothing at this trying hour, because I would not renounce my honest opinions based upon reason, for the blind faith instilled into humanity. Such is religious intolerance, where ignorance reigns supreme.

Knowing that humanity is weak and cankered by the accusations of ages of superstition, I refrain from exposing the follies of some of the members of the same church. Rather than add the weight of a straw to their burdens, I would lighten their loads if I could. I would rather magnify their virtues than to expose their weaknesses.

Let every man do his best to lighten the burdens of humanity, whether he be infidel or Christian.—J. B. SCHWARTZ.

From a Recent Convert.

Editor of Blue Grass Blade—I have received two copies of your very interesting and instructive paper and will say that I am greatly elated over it. It has been quite a while since I read the Blade and as I told my son, J. D. Farris of Timbo, Arkansas, there is quite an improvement in it of late. It was by reading the Blade and Age of Reason, and some of Col. R. G. Ingersoll's sayings, the first Free-thinking literature I ever read in my life, about four years ago, altogether was the cause of my conversion from the imaginative to Real. From Superstition to Reason and such literature will always find a welcome reception with me. Dr. J. B. Wilson's funeral oration on the death of Capt. Henry, I think is the grandest piece I ever read on such an occasion. He certainly is a talented man. A man of genius, of superior mental vigor, only a pity that there were more like him. It would only be for the betterment of humanity.

I also am in receipt of the Memorial Pamphlet of the deceased editor, and founder of the Blade. I received late yesterday P. M., and became so interested in it, that I have gone through it already. I have but few acquaintances in this town and they are such devoted (?) Christians that were I to approach them with such fine and instructive literature, it would almost paralyze them. I have tried them before and they spoke so abruptly that I decided to let them remain in ignorance if they can find any happiness therein. Hoping for you the greatest of success in the sale and distribution of your excellent paper and all such impressive literature to all aspiring minds.—MRS. S. E. FARRIS.

Defends Susan J. Peck.

Mound, Minn. Mr. Editor—Please allow me to reply to E. Lewis, concerning his criticism of Susan J. Peck's article, in which she gives directions by which each reader may prove for himself that Matt. 8, Luke give the genealogies of two called Jesus and we need not take her word for it.

I have consulted by New Testament and find that one was the descendant of David's son, Solomon, and the other the descendant of David's son Nathan, which to me is proof enough, as it should be to anyone who can read and is willing to admit what he sees in print. Yet Mr. Lewis says, "I have found no evidence that Matt. and Luke were talking of separate persons."

Still he admits that there were 495 years difference in time, which another proof, as no person could have been born at two different times 495 years apart. Then he admits that the two are different (what she claimed) and says that both cannot be true. As, well say that his second cousin are the same man. He finishes by saying that Christians do not, but that infidels are beginning to understand the Bible. I have failed to find an infidel who can give its meaning and it is easy to say as they nearly all do, that it is all a falsehood. Since he objects to more than one Jesus, let him refer to old books, in which

the name Jesus occurs where in later ones Luke gives the name Jose. There is also mentioned a Bar-Jesus (son of Jesus) and in II Cor. xi. 4 we read, "For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, ye might well bear with him."

As to the remainder of his article, we have all read its like scores of times. Let us have something new, even though it come from a Christian.

Why cannot infidels see that it will be an advantage to our cause to be able to prove by the Bible itself, that two persons called Jesus were written of, as with such proof, we could sweep church doctrine off the earth, as they are founded on the story of the one only begotten Son?—E. E. JENKINS.

Commends Dr. Wilson's Address.

Covington, Ky. Editor of Blade—Along with many others, I wish to congratulate you on the Blade, under your management. Of course, we all miss the humor that flowed from the brain of brother Moore, as naturally as water from a perennial spring, but otherwise, I think the Blade is better than ever before. Its edge is hardly so sharp, but it cuts a wider swath and is doing more execution. If some ethereal part of our brother still exists and can take cognizance of earthly affairs (as I believe it does), I am sure it is pleased with the success of the enterprise dearest to his heart when he was in the flesh.

I wish in this to call attention to the address of Dr. Wilson at the funeral of Captain Henry. I have read and heard many funeral addresses, and I can truly say that the Doctor's was the best of them all. It deserves the careful attention of all Freethinkers, and should be published in pamphlet form, and widely circulated. It has in my opinion the following points of excellence of the tribute to Captain Henry is truthfully and natural—no fulsome praise or flattery. 2. His portrayal of the influence of the teacher, cannot be surpassed in the same number of sentences. All progress is based on the development and culture of the mind, an dwith a trained, educated, zealous body of teachers, superstition in any odious or injurious form can not long exist. 3. The view he takes of death, while philosophical and consistent with all that is known on the subject, is not that hopeless one that so often characterizes Free-thought funerals. He places it simply among the unknown mysteries with which we are brought face to face every hour of our lives. "We do not know," He speaks with kindness of the spiritualists, who firmly believe in another existence and who are trying to demonstrate it to others, and in this shows himself liberal towards a large, respectable, and rapidly increasing body of men and women. He does not follow the example of the clergy in being as dogmatic in asserting there is no future life as they are in asserting there is a resurrection of the body. 4. His contrast between the comfort consolation to be drawn from the belief of an Agnostic, and that of an orthodox Christian is a fine piece of logic and common sense. The entire effect of the address is to draw one to the conclusion that belief in dogmas and forms of worship, in Gods and Saviors, can have nothing to do in fixing our future station in shades of happiness or suffering. That the whole matter is a part of this wonderful system called Nature about which we should not worry ourselves further than to do our duty, while living now; that we should continually be preparing to live and not to die. I do not agree with all the Doctor says, being myself a firm believer in some form of future existence, but a careful reading of this address will benefit any one—Christian or Free-thinker.—SAMUEL JASPER.

WHAT IS HONEST DOUBT

Brilliant Essay From the Pen of England's Greatest Freethought Leader. A Literary Gem From Every Point of View.

(By GEO. W. FOOTE.)

Tennyson started the talk about "honest doubt." He said that there "lived more faith" in it than in "half the creeds." He meant well. But he was mistaken. What is more, he was in a confusion. The whole passage was, perhaps, the weakest platitude in his Memoriam; and platitude so easily runs into sheer ineptitude.

It is assumed in this unfortunate passage of Tennyson's, that there is some special virtue in "faith" and some special vice in "doubt." But it is perfectly clear, when you come to reflect, that "faith" and "doubt" must both have an object, and that the value of either depends upon what they are related to. If you have faith that the moon is made of green cheese and I doubt the proposition, the difference is not one of transcendent importance, but if you have faith that a certain man will keep his word and I doubt his fidelity and the life of liberty

to his pledge, our difference is of tremendous importance. If you are right, of both of us depends on his being true; we both gain; if I am right, we both lose. But the issue does not establish your moral superiority over me, or mine over you; it simply establishes the fact that your judgment was superior to mine, or mine to yours; and judgment is an intellectual process, which a bad man may sometimes perform better than a good one.

It is absurd to speak of "faith" in the abstract. When we are told that a man has faith, we should ask "faith in what?" He may have faith in a God of vengeance, or faith in a God of mercy; he may have faith in "grace" or faith in "good works;" he may have faith in moral rectitude or faith in Papal indulgences; he may have faith in reaching heaven through the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ, or faith in reaching heaven through the gracious favor of the Virgin Mary, he may have faith in the Holy Trinity or faith in Mumbo Jumbo; he may have faith in holy water, faith in transubstantiation, faith in priestly pardon, faith in extreme unction, and faith in prayers for the abbreviation of purgatory, or he may have faith in simple human virtues, and regard all those things as superstitious inventions.

You may tell me that a man has faith, I may trust myself in his hands, and I may find that he is a Thug. By an act of faith he murders me. The deity he worships is pleased with human blood, and mine is shed for his gratification. The contents of my pocket may, at the same time, fall into the hands of the assassin; but the agent is entitled to some advantage as well as the principal.

John Huss trusted himself in the hands of the Catholic party, and they burnt him alive, because they had a faith against keeping faith with heretics.

A man may doubt the wisdom of peace, or doubt the wisdom of war. A man may doubt the value of parliamentary government, or doubt the value of autocracy. A man may doubt the sense of free trade, or doubt the sense of protection. A man may doubt anything, or doubt its opposite. And what is the use of counting his doubts as moral or immoral? They are nothing of the kind. They are simply opinions, which he forms according to his information and intellectual capacity.

If one man works a sum and give the right answer, he is not moral, he is accurate. If another man works the sum and gives a wrong answer, he is not immoral, he is inaccurate. And the bad arithmetician may be the better citizen of the two.

Learned and able judges are sometimes reversed by other judges. There is a difference of opinion in the two separate hearings. But it would be absurd to infer that the judge in the first instance was wicked, and the judge in the second instance virtuous.

Faith is but an opinion, and doubt is an opinion; and by no possibility can an opinion be moral or immoral. Those terms only apply to actions and agents. Opinions may be sound or unsound; in other words, they may be accurate or inaccurate. They cannot be anything else.

This philosophy teaches charity. Although we cannot all see eye to eye with each other, we can dwell together in peace and goodwill. A fellow citizen may differ from me and not deserve locking up; and I may differ from him, without deserving the gallows.

People differ on the most important practical questions, and still regard each other as gentlemen; yet when they differ on speculative questions, as to which they are all very much in the dark, they scowl and hiss and spit at each other, and call each other vile names, and do each other terrible injuries, and sometimes cut off each other's heads, or break each other to pieces, or burn each other to death.

All bigotry is bad, but religious bigotry is the worst of all. It is rare to find a Christian who admits that an "infidel" may be as good a man as himself. The priests and parsons naturally minister to this evil spirit. They treat unbelief as a sin. They represent

those who reject their teachings as enemies of God. They speak the word Atheist a sin it were the name of a monster. The better sort of them still talk of "honest doubts"—as though there could be dishonest doubts. Whenever they see an opponent they say (or look) "I am holier than thou." And the police reports often show that they are not.

Even the Rev. F. T. Forsyth, M. A., D. D., one of the "great" Free Church divines, in a Hibbert Journal article some time ago, ventured to express himself in the following manner:—

"Much more doubt is voluntary and culpable than it is the fashion to admit. The mental confusion is due to psychology. Otherwise he would know how absurd it is to speak of doubt as voluntary. The will has nothing to do with the matter. A man cannot believe as he would; he believes as he must. It is impossible for him to disbelieve what he sees to be the truth—and impossible for him to believe what he sees to be a falsehood."

When a man passes over anything lightly he does so because he thinks it is unimportant. And when Dr. Forsyth speaks of "the historic Christ," he should remember—for he surely knows—that many sceptics do not believe in the historicity of that personage. They have looked into the matter and have found a different conclusion from that which is propounded by Dr. Forsyth. Were they to call him a scoundrel, he would be justly indignant; but it appears that he feels at liberty to suggest that they are no better than they should be.

Considering that at least a half of the people of this country never darken the doors of church or chapel, it seems high time that the men of God dropped these impudent airs of superiority. They are not wiser men, they are not better men, than their fellow citizens. And people are beginning to laugh at the clerical "swelled head."

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